

Thomas Jefferson, October 15, 1792, On "interests of a nation" for President's Message, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

PARAGRAPHS FOR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE¹ J. MSS.

¹ In a paper dated Nov. 1, 1792, Jefferson suggested an alteration in this paper, as follows:

“Instead of the paragraph ‘The interests of a nation &c.—within our own,’ formerly proposed, the following substitute is thought better.

“All observations are unnecessary on the value of peace with ether nations. It would be wise however, by timely provisions, to guard against those acts of our own citizens, which might tend to disturb it, and to put ourselves in a condition to give that satisfaction to foreign nations, which we may sometimes have occasion to require from them. I particularly recommend to your consideration the means of preventing those aggressions by our citizens on the territory of other nations, and other infractions of the law of nations, which, furnishing just subject of complaint, might endanger our peace with them.—And in general the maintenance &c.”

[October 15, 1792.]

The interests of a nation, when well understood, will be found to coincide with their moral duties. Among these it is an important one to cultivate habits of peace & friendship with our neighbors. To do this we should make provision for rendering the justice we must sometimes require from them. I recommend therefore to your consideration. Whether

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the laws of the Union should not be extended to restrain our citizens from committing acts of violence within the territories of other nations, which would be punished were they committed within our own.—And in general the maintenance of a friendly intercourse with foreign nations will be presented to your attention by the expiration of the law for that purpose, which takes place, if not renewed, at the close of the present session.

In execution of the authority given by the legislature, measures have been taken for engaging some artists from abroad to aid in the establishment of our mint; others have been employed at home; provision has been made of the requisite buildings, and these are now putting into proper condition for the purposes of the establishment. There has been also a small beginning in the coinage of the half dimes & cents, the want of small coins in circulation calling our first attentions to them.